

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, re-examination and reconsideration of the subject matter identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.111, and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

Initially Applicants wish to acknowledge the interview held on May 25, 2006 between Examiner Nguyen and Applicants' Representative Ms. Emas, Mr. Lesmes, Ms. Ito, Mr. Maekawa, Mr. Kuratani and Mr. Yamaguchi. The Examiner's courtesy and helpful suggestions are acknowledged with appreciation.

Claims 9 and 10 have been amended for grammatical purposes and to replace the word "having" with --comprising--. Claims 11 and 12 have been amended to correct their dependencies. Claims 9-12 remain pending in this application.

As indicated during the aforementioned interview, claims identical in scope to claims 9-12 have been allowed by the Japanese Patent Office in a corresponding application. This application has issued as Japanese Patent No. 3279294 based upon Application No. 11-241690, filed August 27, 1999, and identified in the first paragraph on page 1 of the present specification. Application No. 11-241690 was published May 26, 2000. Since the inventors listed in the '690 publication are the same inventors as in the present application, the '690 publication is unavailable as a reference pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(a). Note M.P.E.P., page 2100-81, paragraph III.

Japanese Application No. 10-245881, identified on page 1 of the present specification, was never published.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any

questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 838-6683 at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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from Burns, Doane, Swecker & Mathis)

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